‘He is no Pope at all’ – Traditional Redemptorists reject Leo XIV and predecessors

The Sons of the Most Holy Redeemer have denounced the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and called for a solution.

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Sat May 2, 2026 - 10:16 am EDT

(LifeSiteNews) — The Sons of the Most Holy Redeemer, a traditionalist Catholic congregation based on Papa Stronsay in Scotland, have issued a declaration denouncing Paul VI through to Leo XIV as “papal pretenders,” and condemning the reforms of the Second Vatican Council as having “brought about a major schism from the Mystical Body.”

The community – often called the “Transalpine Redemptorists” – was founded by Father Michael Mary Sim in 1987 under the auspices of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and the Society of St. Pius X, at the encouragement of Cardinal Édouard Gagnon. It was reconciled with the Vatican in 2012 and has operations in the U.S. and New Zealand.

The letter attached to the declaration explains the community’s position regarding the state of the Church following Vatican II, detailing the prior teaching of the Church and arguing that there has been a significant departure from it.

"If the See of Peter were to teach error," the letter states, "then beyond any possible doubt, the person teaching that error is not a Catholic Pope. And if he is not a Catholic Pope, he is no Pope at all."

The text calls for an "Imperfect General Council" to make an authoritative declaration and resolve the crisis in the Church.

The community's letter also restates their regret for their previous reconciliation with the Vatican in 2012, stating that "there has been a great mistake on our part to think that the hierarchy of the *Novus Ordo* was sufficiently Catholic for us to operate under its command."

In July 2024, the Redemptorists were ordered to leave the Diocese of Christchurch within 24 hours by Bishop Michael Gielen. The community denied accusations made by Gielen and took canonical action against the eviction notice.

In October 2025, the community issued an open letter "to the Catholic Bishops, Priests, Religious and Faithful" following their General Chapter. This open letter accused the modern hierarchy of betraying the faith and pledged to offer the Traditional Mass and spiritual help if "there is but one soul that asks."

Within a week, Bishop Hugh Gilbert, OSB of Aberdeen, Scotland, announced that he had been in touch with the Vatican to determine the group's canonical standing.

"The Diocese deeply regrets the tone, direction and key elements of this Letter," he said on October 24. "The competent Dicasteries of the Holy See are also studying the situation and will provide canonical and doctrinal guidance."

Following the letter, the community issued another statement on November 7 denouncing *Mater Populi Fidelis*, a controversial doctrinal note that says it is "inappropriate" to apply the term "Co-Redemptrix" to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The document was issued by the Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) earlier this week and bears the signature of Leo XIV.

In December 2025, Fr. Michael Mary spoke to LifeSiteNews' John Henry Westen on the controversy:

In April 2026, a 24-year-old monk went missing from the monastery in the Orkneys. Br Ignatius is presumed to have drowned, although police are treating his case as one of a missing person. Scottish Police are not treating the disappearance as suspicious.

“The months from October 2024 onward were occupied with prayer and study,” Fr. Michael Mary told LifeSiteNews.

“Deciding to speak on these matters was not easy. Our community has patiently awaited and sincerely hoped for this letter and declaration.”

This story is developing.